



California Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans News

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GOV. SCHWARZENEGGER SIGNS LEGISLATION TO ENABLE CONSTRUCTION OF VETERANS' HOMES

Governor Schwarzenegger announced today that he has signed SB 630 by Senator Sam Aanestad (R-Grass Valley) to move forward with the construction of the new veterans' homes in Los Angeles, Shasta and Fresno counties.

"We owe our veterans a tremendous debt of gratitude for the contributions they have made to our state and for their dedicated service to our country," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "Since I came into office, one of my top priorities for our states' veterans has been to ensure that these homes are completed. This bill is an important step forward in ensuring that these homes become a reality for our many veterans who need them."

SB 630 authorizes \$30 million in lease-revenue bonds to be used in conjunction with federal funds for the new veterans' homes. The bill also authorizes construction of these homes to take place prior to receiving a grant from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs' State Homes Grant Program (SHGP) so long as these homes remain a priority for federal funding. This measure spares the state from cost increases due to inflation by using interim financing to construct the Redding and Fresno homes pending receipt of the federal funds.

This \$30 million provided for in the legislation is needed to complete the construction of the Fresno and Redding veterans' homes, which will cost approximately \$222 million. The total cost of the five veterans' homes is more than \$522 million in state and federal money, with about 60 percent being covered by federal funds.

In 2004, Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 1077, authorizing \$100 million in lease-revenue bonds to finance five new state-operated homes. Also in 2004, the Governor participated in negotiations that jumpstarted the long awaited projects, established a plan and committed federal money to complete the \$300 million Southern California Homes project.

The West Los Angeles Veterans Home, together with the Lancaster and Ventura Veterans Homes, form the Greater Los Angeles Ventura Counties (GLAVC) Project. The total cost for constructing these three veterans' homes is approximately \$300 million. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs' contribution to construct all three Southern California veterans' homes is about \$180 million and California's contribution is estimated at \$120 million.

The budget, as it now stands, includes \$621,000 General Fund and eight personnel for the initial construction and pre-activation phases of the Greater Los Angeles and Ventura Counties Project. The personnel will come on board in January.

Before the GLAVC project, California had only three veterans' homes currently serving about 1,700 veterans. With this project and two more veterans' homes being planned in Redding and Fresno, the capacity of the states veterans' homes system in California will more than double.

Last year's budget included \$3.8 million for the new Alzheimer's/Dementia unit at Yountville Veterans' Home.

Last month, the Governor's Office and the California Department of Veteran's Affairs helped secure a \$5.6 million grant to a private organization known as "the Pathway Home" which will provide treatment and transition care for returning veterans as well as follow-up support for them and their families. The state is also providing logistical support and a facility at the Veterans Home of California in Yountville.

California is home to more than 2.2 million veterans, more than in any other state in the nation.

In addition, the Governor signed the following two bills to benefit veterans.

SB 234 by Senator Ellen Corbett (D-San Leandro) - Consumer warranties: members of the Armed Forces. This bill applies the Lemon Law protections to a vehicle purchase made by an active member of the United States Armed Forces regardless of which state the vehicle is purchased in, provided that the member of the Armed Forces was stationed in or a resident of this state at the time the vehicle is purchased.

AB 257 by Assembly member Joel Anderson (R-La Mesa) - Parks: veterans: park passes. This bill makes recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor eligible for the Department of Parks and Recreation's (DPR) Disabled War Veterans and Prisoners of War Pass. In addition, this bill eliminates the \$3.50 one-time fee to purchase the DPR Veteran's Pass.

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